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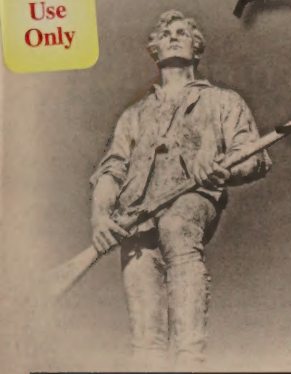

The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Fall Play
"The Skin of Our Teeth" begins rehearsing for performances Dec. 12-14.
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Fall Sports Wrap Up
LHS girls' swim team finishes season with record of eight wins and three losses.
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Volume LVIV Issue II—November 2016

LHS Jazz Combo performs at Aeronaut Brewery for fundraiser

Allie Antonevich
Shweta Kondapi
Staff Writers

On Nov. 5, Lexington High School's Jazz Combo performed at Aeronaut Brewery in Somerville. Their performance served as a fundraising opportunity to raise money for their trip to New Orleans later this year, while providing the members a time to work on their craft and performance skills.

Jazz Combo was invited to the Jazz Educators Network Conference in New Orleans, which will take place in January 2017. Starting the summer of 2016, the group has been raising money to attend the event through CD sales and by playing gigs. When the group heard they had the opportunity to play at Aeronaut Brewery, they took it.

The Brewery has become an ideal place for Jazz Combo to perform.

"Aeronaut Brewery opened up to be an artistic and cultural spot," Patrick Donaher, an LHS music teacher who is assisting these students with their performance, said.

The brewery has painted chairs, giant metallic fans and dim fairy lights hanging from the ceiling and 80's video games projected on the wall. The band performed right next to the bar.

"This [was] an opportunity for anybody to come and listen to us that in a place that wasn't the standard concert setting. [Aeronaut Brewery was] a much more informal atmosphere for people to listen to us show what we've accomplished over these past two months," Will Mukamal, a senior and pianist in Jazz Combo, said.

Half of the pieces selected for the performance were by Charles Mingus, a famous jazz composer and bassist. Both the students and Donaher selected and arranged some pieces. The performance required students to put in time both in and out of class.

Staff photo by Eunice Kim

(From left to right) Will Mukamal (keyboard), Chris Morse (saxophone), Dylan Turner (saxophone), Alice Troop (saxophone) and Alex Tung (trumpet) perform as part of the Jazz Combo at the Aeronaut Brewery.

"Combo is like any other class in that it meets four days a week in school, so we dedicate significant time just through class time to rehearsing and making sure our group sound is cohesive," Mukamal said. "While I don't have to explicitly practice for combo often, I do work on improving at soloing, comping (accompanying a soloist), time, et cetera, every day for varying amounts of time, and all of these elements are essential to sounding good and making every performance better."

Chris Morse, a member of Jazz Combo and tenor saxophonist, arranged Mingus' "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love," one of the pieces for the performance.

"With a limited knowledge of jazz theory, I find it easier to arrange music by ear," Morse said. "[I start by] creating chords just by writing them into a piece, and manipulating them until I like the way they sound… it's a lot of trial and error," he said.

The Brewery held a large turnout, with about 50 people attending the performance.

LHS introduces new Independent Digital Learning Center

Jen Lo
Pranathi Srirangam
Sukanya Walhekar
Staff Writers

One of the changes accompanying the 2016-2017 school year at Lexington High School is the creation of the Independent Digital Learning Center, previously known as the Science Lecture Hall. It was created this year to allow teachers to send their students to the IDLC when they are absent.

The IDLC is used for most of the blocks throughout the day. Multiple classes of various subjects can be placed in the IDLC at once, though the classes are separated to different areas of the room to ensure that students work productively on the assigned material.

Jim Borden, the Electronic Learning Facilitator, works in the IDLC to supervise students in the place of their teachers so that students can proceed with the scheduled curriculum instead of the fill time with conventional substitute teachers. When Borden heard about the opportunity to head the program, he applied, created a plan and presented it to the faculty.

Borden is able to hear firsthand about what the students are learning and works alongside the teachers to develop a plan for the students. When a teacher is going to be absent, he meets with them beforehand so that they describe to him how they want their content to be presented.

If there is a sudden reason to leave, a teacher can email him before the day starts and have their students come in later, although it would be less than ideal since Borden prefers to get to know the teachers with which he is working.

Teachers absent for professional development normally leave instructions behind for the substitute, who then has to blindly teach the class. Through the creation of Borden's position, teachers no longer have to worry about substitutes confused by their instructions.

"Classically, when you have a substitute, you are learning in a passive manner, you are given an assignment and you are told what to do, and you do it," Borden said.

The IDLC differs from a traditional substitute teacher setting because it provides the opportunity to bolster advocacy and collaboration between students. Students take the initiative to access their own learning by doing the assignment without a substitute passing out a piece of paper.

"Mr. Borden got straight to the point and let us go off to do it. It was good how we had laptops .... And also, I like how it was set up, so we could all talk together and ask each other about a particular problem," Avery Fortier, a freshman, said.

"Every single time I've been in there I have my laptop so there has been enough space for me to work. There's not much of a difference because the teacher still gives the same amount of work," said Manu Gunnala, a junior.

According to student feedback, the small pull-out desks offer little room for students to write, so Borden has ordered more tables so that students can work with their various materials at the same time. The school has also doubled the bandwidth in the IDLC so that the increased usage in the space will not slow the internet.

Editorial

Lexington Public Schools should use Google applications and drop FirstClass servers.

Talks of switching the school's email server away from FirstClass have become official. During weekly Wednesday meetings, which began on October 26 and ended November 9, representatives from the updated version of FirstClass, Microsoft and Google pitched their technologies and their potential benefits.

While each company provides its own unique benefits to the Lexington Public Schools, the best choice may be the server we know best. We need a system of technology that's simple and easy to understand, and for many students, this server is Google.

Google is the server with which the student body has the most experience. It is the server that hosts the majority of students' personal email addresses, as well as our documents, classroom assignments, groups, and more. For this reason, just using Google would not require much adjustment for LHS students. Even our teachers and faculty members have Google accounts.

Not only is Google a server with which members of the Lexington student body or faculty are comfortable, but perhaps the system most suitable for the technology at our school. For instance, Google is by far the best system for Chromebooks, a device designed specifically for Google software. LHS Chromebooks have been an effective and less expensive way for all students to access online resources at times where library computers or laptop carts are unavailable. With I Block creating a larger need for computers, the demand for Chromebooks could increase as well. This potential issue is all the more reason to keep or further expand on the Lexington Public Schools' use of Google applications.

Another advantage of using Google is its security combined with a large amount of storage. Google encrypts all emails sent to and from accounts on Google, and if all students and faculty were using Google emails it would decrease the possibility of having personal information stolen. Also, Google has 15 gigabytes of free storage compared to the 200 megabytes that one has on FirstClass. Microsoft systems have more storage, but as previously mentioned, Google is the system with which students and teachers are most experienced. Using Google, one can have the storage for at least 30,000 emails AND keep them secure at the same time.

Lastly, Google can provide its numerous features at no cost to the school. This means that using Google could free up funds and be used to further improve the quality of education at Lexington High School.

However, there are teachers who prefer FirstClass due to its well-designed conference system. The FirstClass conference system allows members of specific groups to exchange emails, share files, or even organize conversations with ease. However, one must consider that Google's application, Google Groups, serves essentially the same purpose. As Google Groups continues to upgrade and improve, it may further fulfill the role of FirstClass conferencing had in teachers' day to day lives.

Another concern Lexington faculty may have concerning the switch to Google is the difficulty for teachers to transfer their multitude of documents and data to a new server. Just as students may struggle with the transfer of their information to a new system, transferring to Google may pose some serious inconveniences for faculty members. The process of uploading can be time consuming, and without proper planning while switching systems, the new server could cause more harm than good.

Ultimately deciding which email server to use will be put up to a specified board with LHS student interests represented by Derik Kaufman and Evan McCarty, but Google's simplicity and convenience should make it the preferred system for all members of Lexington Public Schools over FirstClass or Microsoft.

Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of the majority of the editorial board.

'Blackout Fridays' raise awareness and discussion

Eunice Kim
Karannath Ragunath
Staff Writer

Initiated in late September by METCO students Taylor Jeffries, Kayla McDonald, Ashli Parr, Mahkala Queensborough and Chanell Rodriguez, "Blackout Fridays" is a new tradition that aims to foster awareness of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

Organizations like BLM assemble supporters to lead nonviolent protests against institutionalized discrimination against African Americans. In the last few years, many cases of white-on-black brutality, especially at the hands of police officers, have come to the attention of mainstream media, sparking a nationwide outcry for social reform.

Inspired by these events, Jeffries, Rodriguez, McDonald, Queensborough and Parr hope to bring awareness of racial discrimination by designing a weekly program. They made posters and social media posts urging students and faculty to dress all in black on Fridays.

"Blackout Fridays" was a massive success in serving its two original purposes: identifying supporters and bringing awareness to those who are unaware of BLM. A large number of the Lexington High School community participated in its first week, with many students and faculty dressing in black.

Furthermore, the weekly event not only appears to raise awareness of the cause but creates an open dialogue amongst the diverse community of LHS.

"I am black, and I have different views on American society than someone who is not black or a person of color" Jeffries said. It's important that the wide range of perspectives LHS students have on discrimination be represented.

However, one may argue that the event's results are not sustainable. After all, in the following few weeks, lack of reinforcements and announcements seems to have produced mounted confusion about the future of "Blackout Fridays". Additionally, Fridays overlap with another social-awareness tradition, "LHS Pride," which encourages staff members to wear Lexington High School spirit. Their conflicting schedules force participating staff to make a difficult choice.

Despite suffering from a few complications in its early stages, "Blackout Fridays" has served its most essential purpose: starting a conversation on racial discrimination. Currently, students and principal Laura Lasa are negotiating options to prevent the prioritizing of certain social groups to optimize recognition. While "Blackout Fridays" is undoubtedly a cause for recognition, we should work together to implement a more solid awareness program that reaches all of the LHS population.

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2016–2017

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9 p.m. Turnitin deadline: pros and cons

PRO

Jessica Karson
Staff Writer

For the numerous classes at Lexington High School that involve the use of Google Classroom or other websites for the completion and submission of work, there is a 9 p.m. deadline policy.

The 9 p.m. online homework policy cuts students 'stress short before it can leak late into the night.

This policy does not allow teachers to give online assignments with a deadline later than 9 p.m.. Getting an adequate amount of sleep for high school students is necessary for living a healthy and balanced life.

Research from the University of Pennsylvania has shown that even relatively moderate sleep restriction in healthy young adults significantly impaired their neurologic and behavioral functioning.

Timed online deadlines in general lead students to turn in their work close to the hour that it is due.

Assignments that are due late into the evening allow and even encourage students to stay up far too late to submit their work.

Doing any kind of work late at night can be tough for students. When asked about completing homework late at night, sophomore Melanie Lesure said, "I put more pressure on myself to get it done."

While this deadline is good for keeping students from staying up too late, it is also not too early in the day. Some students have various after school events like meeting with teachers or clubs. Most of these events end in the afternoon so once they are over, students would still have enough time look over their work and submit their assignments by the evening deadline.

The 9 p.m. deadline is a happy-medium to all the deadline options possible after school. However the 9 p.m. deadline is also advantageous as opposed to the other possibility of an in-class deadline.

"I think 9 p.m. is good compromise ... it gives students time to review their work at home if they'd like as opposed to an in-class deadline" 10th grade Literature and Composition teacher Taylor Liljegren said.

In-class deadlines may prompt students to complete the work during the same school day which would lead to hurried and less thoughtful work. Also, having an after class deadline would allow students to rethink some of their work based on information they received or questions they had answered in class.

The 9 p.m. deadline policy is a balanced system which helps students get an earlier start on their homework and thus prevents students from staying up far too late into the night which can add unnecessary stress to students' lives.

CON

Emily Ma
Staff Writer

As technology becomes a convenient staple of modern culture, more assignments are being turned in online.

However, there is a flaw in this system: online deadlines. Specifically, deadlines that are too early, or before 9 p.m., which are becoming the ball and chain for many students.

Charlotte Parish, a 9th grade English teacher and girls volleyball coach, said that her Google Classroom assignments are typically due at the beginning of class. The reason? Extracurriculars are becomingly increasingly popular, especially now that LHS sports are in full swing, and these classes are absorbing a significant amount of time.

"I'm a coach, and I know that my girls don't get home until 9:00 sometimes," Parish said.

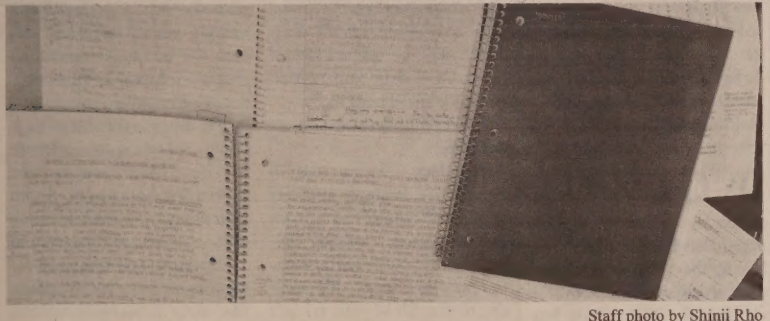
Not to mention, almost every kid is involved with extracurriculars, so extending online deadlines would benefit a staggering majority of LHS students.

Of course, some argue that there are certain perks to earlier deadlines, for example decreasing procrastination. Extended deadlines can sometimes entice kids to put off their homework. "Later deadlines might encourage procrastination," said Parish. However, no matter the deadline, kids with extensive extracurriculars don't have an opportunity to procrastinate. Perhaps instead, it can cause a significant increase in stress levels.

"If I had to turn in my work by 9:00 the previous day, I would have a lot more stress because I have soccer until 5:15," Eliza Stokes, a freshman, said.

Moreover, the online deadline does not affect teachers, according to Parish. She checks her classroom's state during class time, and only then does she note if a student is behind on their due dates.

If a later online deadline doesn't impinge upon teachers' lessons, students should have extra time to improve the quality of their work.



Staff photo by Shinji Rho

LHS' extreme stress culture: pros and cons

PRO

Talia Blatt
Staff Writer

With snapchats of facepalms at midnight and the zombies of first period, Lexington High School culture seems to only manifest itself in overcommitment and stress. The environment of excellence has bred fanaticism around college while fueling anxiety and controversy among students, educators and parents. However, LHS isn't causing distress; it's producing driven, resilient students with friends and readiness for life.

LHS encourages happiness by immersing its student body in extracurriculars.

"Have you heard of flow theory?" asked Tamara Kamis, an LHS junior. "It basically says that the definition of happiness is getting in 'the zone' with something you enjoy." At LHS, students are definitely "getting in the zone" with all of their rigorous activities.

Pressure to get involved has created opportunities for friendship.

"In stressful academic extracurriculars such as debate, I've been able to emotionally and intellectually connect with people," said Devanshi Bhangle, an LHS sophomore. Even if motivation comes from a college app, the relationships formed are valuable.

Diligence from competition can serve as a major motivator and lifelong skill.

"Stress is a huge motivation for me .... When I come home knowing that I have a lot of homework, I work more productively," Andrew Ordentlich, an LHS junior, said.

Hard work and delayed gratification correlate with success later in life, according to a Stanford study. It showed that young children who waited for two marshmallows instead of immediately indulging in one, were more successful in the long term.

Initiatives such as I Block have been monolithic and repetitive: we all have heard that stress is bad, and that this warrants a restructuring of LHS. Balance and health are definitely key for teenagers, but this doesn't mean we should do away with the numerous benefits of LHS' high-intensity culture, either.

CON

Emily Chen
Staff Writer

A culture of extreme academics and extracurriculars is woven into the very fabric of Lexington High School. The stress resulting from this intense culture fosters detrimental competition between students, ultimately ruining both their educational purpose and their self-worth.

Academic competition at LHS initiates divides between classmates. According to the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data, 85 percent of all LHS students felt the atmosphere of LHS encourages academic competition.

This competition distracts students from their focus at school, to learn. As researched by psychologists Judith L. Meece, Eric M. Anderman, and Lynley H. Anderman, competitive educational culture completely de-motivates naturally lower-performing students.

Academic competition is exclusive and demeaning towards students who do not naturally do well academically, greatly devalued and thrown aside by peers as meaningless or irresponsible. Low-performing students do not have the motivation to work harder; sometimes, students' only incentive is competition, but students who have been "beaten" by the competition feel hopeless, like their peers will always be higher than them.

Natalia Abbate, a sophomore, said,"No one ever recognizes you because you never feel just as smart as everyone else. Try as you might, there is like no way to actually get there .... I can't just sit down, other people are working."

It is true that a little competition is healthy, or even necessary, for academic motivation and success. However, too much competition results in overly stressed students with poor self-worth as they lose sight on educational purpose and end up doing worse in school. And that is exactly what is happening at LHS.

"I believe it is no longer worth it. That we can still have rigor here, and really high expectations for academic learning but it doesn't have to be at the level we do ... Everyone comes here and appreciates the value of our really high quality education but at the end of the day, who we are as people is what gets us somewhere once we get out of here, " Principal Laura Lasa said.

Staff photo by Serena Valor

(From left to right) Andrew Rojnuckarin, Eyad Abbas, Maxim Griner, and Jacob London perform at Jazz Nite.

Music department showcases Jazz Nite 1

■ Jinhee Heo
William Zen
Staff Writer

Awash in pink and orange lights, the jazz students performed their sets in black suits and colorful ties, music resonating throughout the cafeteria-turned nightclub.

Jazz Nite 1, the first of four Jazz Nites, was on Nov. 4 in Commons II and featured Seminar in Jazz Improvisation, Jazz Septet and the Jazz Combo.

"The main goal of the Jazz Nites is to give our small groups an opportunity to perform in a setting that's a little bit closer to what a small group would perform in in 'real life.' Typically in the tradition, small bands, bands anywhere from 3 to 8 or 9 players would play at nightclubs, first for dancers and then for listening. So we turn Commons II into closer to a nightclub format and the improvisation classes and the small groups share the bill," said Pat Donaher, the director of Jazz Combo and Jazz Ensemble.

Describing the work done in class, Donaher said that improvisation and composition are intertwined in jazz.

"The kids write their own blues using what they've worked on as improvisers and then we turn around and improvise using the blues that they wrote as a foundation point. There is a cycle to it," Donaher said.

The F-block session of Seminar in Jazz Improvisation performed Teenie's Blues by Oliver Nelson, I Got Rhythm by George and Ira Gershwin and Sweet Georgia Brown by Ben Bernie, Maceo Pinkard and Kenneth Casey. E-block performed original compositions Blues Clues by Emma Crowley, Wounded Unit of Measurement (If Miles Davis Were a Gunslinger, He'd Shoot Himself in the Foot) by Nico Daglio-Fine and Ogygia by Noah Jacobson.

Jazz bands fit into two categories. The Seminar classes form ensembles called Big Band which are composed of 15-20 people. The other category, Combos, are small groups which focus on solos rather than ensemble playing.

The LHS Jazz Combo performed Charles Mingus' "Eh's Flat Ah's Flat Too" in preparation for an upcoming competition. They also performed "Hot House" by Tadd Dameron and "Dusk" by Andrew Hill.

Tim Watson, a member of the Jazz Septet, said that the Septet has more freedom than school jazz classes to choose their repertoire.

Freshmen deserve respect, too

■ Elizabeth Zhang
Columnist

As many of you know, high school is hard — and I've only just begun my freshman year. Lexington High School is WAY different than the middle schools. Grades are harsher, and more importantly, there are more tests and quizzes, and the list goes on. I don't know about all the other people in different grades, but among us freshmen, it's common to hear phrases such as: "it's only Quarter 1 and I'm already done with school."

Yes, the academic part of high school is very challenging, but social problems can make our years here even rougher. So please, upperclassmen, have empathy and don't make the school year harder than it already is.

I know LHS becomes more stressful with each year. But really, the upperclassmen out there need to treat us freshmen better. They cannot just shoo us out of "[their] table" at lunch because they've "been sitting there for three years already" (quoted by a few juniors). Excuse me, have they EVER been a freshman in their life? Most likely. So, I'm guessing they know how it feels to go into this whole new gigantic school with no idea of where to sit because the environment is just not familiar to them yet. I mean, BE NICE! Just because they're older than us doesn't mean that they can boss us around like that. How would they feel if some college people just came and pushed them around? Would they feel pleased? I would hope not. If they do, then to those few who like being bossed around, please consider those who DO NOT like being ordered around.

Upperclassmen should be nice to their fellow freshmen, and vice versa (freshmen need to be friendly, too!). Trust me, being nice to people can make everyone's day better — it's good karma!

Sure, upperclassmen have bad days. Well, guess what? So do us freshmen. If some upperclassmen are just not having the time of their lives, they shouldn't take it out on us and make our days horrible (or even worse). It's not nice, and it doesn't improve anything.

Remember, by harming others emotionally, you harm yourself. If you really need to release your anger, you could at least talk it out nicely with someone. We're all not alone!

I hope that I haven't offended anyone in this column, but if I did, I owe you my deepest apologies. But please try to understand and consider the people around in school. If someone is having a terrible day, it's most likely that someone else is having a depressing day, too. The absolute worst thing that anyone could do is make that unlucky person's day even worse. No one should ever feel satisfied by bullying others — it's just wrong that way. So, with that, I thank everyone for their time, and let's all stay strong in the sweet part of us!

Three tips for writing college applications

collegebored

■ Yuhang Zhang
Columnist

Something I realized this year, while grinding through stacks of college essays: the admissions officer, that professional reader a college trusts with their existence— he or she isn't as stupid as you think.

That's right. It may come as a surprise to you, but they won't buy your story that, through growing carrots, you entered a period of maturity and intellectual growth, leading you to discover the meaning of life. Or that bouncy balls don't teach you how to always get back up.

Luckily, you have me, a master of English and the human personification of a good writer, to help you out. (For any underclassmen readers who have stumbled in here, there may be something of worth in this documentation of senior suffering.)

1. Everyone is (insert adjective here).

Fun fact: 100 percent of prospective college students would self-identify as a "motivated person," already evidenced by their willingness to apply to college. It's wonderful that all of your friends would describe you as hard-working, cheerful, motivated, friendly (etc.), but colleges really don't care. What you need to show is that you have an unique blend of characteristics, and that it shows through in your essay. Words are cheap, mass-produced,and most likely typed half an hour before a deadline. Instead of peppering your essays with empty adjectives, tell a story through actions — the hours you spent working, learning, and staying up late to finish that History essay — those are the experiences that admission officers value.

2. Prada is better than Costco

All a luxury bag has over the one at your local shop is a tiny logo, some extra stitches and a $3000 price tag. People are the same way; there are so, so many people who are almost exactly like you. It's those tiny details, the ones that are swept underneath the rug, that set us apart. You may think that you need to show off a fake representation of yourself, perfectly polished and already set to do anything in the world, but colleges have those people already. What they want is to see your rough edges, to see what makes you tick differently. So dig out those embarrassing memories, the times when you felt different and exposed, and wear them proudly. After all, no luxury brand gets by with modesty.

3. Make them feel that high school angst.

Admission officers realize that you are in high school. Do they want you to seem ready for college? Yes. However, share your experiences from the point of a high schooler. At Lexington High School, where math and debate are our most renowned sports, sometimes the academic atmosphere makes you forget this is still just a high school filled with children. No one expects you to have everything figured out. So, in your essays, conveying a tone of innocence and discovery is a surprising and uniquely refreshing style to your readers. The more it seems you have to learn, the more a college can teach you.

You probably haven't noticed, as no one reads really that this carefully, but my tips have not been very specific. In fact, they have mostly just set a general direction for you to work toward. The real secret to college writing, that holy grail of the Common App, is that there is no formula. Attempting to plug in a generic essay will get you the results you deserve — a generic rejection letter. Instead, put on your weirdest playlist, hoard up on some junk food, and start drafting. Your essays may still get rejected, but at least it will be you being rejected, not some plastic cari-

To read more, visit lexmusket.com

Staff photo by Kelly Hui

The cast of The Skin of Our Teeth play enacts a scene: (from left to right) Anelga Hajjar, Sarah Zola, Ansel Link, Sydney Hart, Danna Ofek, Trevor James, Yoojee Kim, Carlos Fruzzetti, Clare Wiesen, Chelsea Cannon, and Maeve Wiesen. Not pictured: Will Blumberg, Isaac Mukamal, Sophie Kahn, Henry Hoffman, Allison Chaput, Prithul Sen, and Lauren Steiger.

LHS fall play, 'The Skin of Our Teeth,' begins rehearsals

■ Lara Bursal
Avani Kabra
Staff Writers

This year, the fall play features aspects of the Bible, the Ice Age and Atlantic City, all simultaneously fitting into one storyline for an intriguing outlook on history.

From Dec. 12 through 14, Lexington High School will be performing the play "The Skin of Our Teeth," centered around a nuclear American family that aims to represent the whole human race over thousands of years.

"It is a commentary on human nature," director Kate Bromley said. "We are able to bounce back and keep starting over when we survive natural and manmade disasters. The human ability to start over again and again and the tendency to fall back into complacency and then repeat past mistakes are themes in the play."

Michael Frank, an LHS alumnus, has returned to the drama program as the co-director for the play.

"His ideas are really good and we all take construction from him and we all respect him …. He has very similar ideas to what Ms. Bromley would do," Sarah Zola, a sophomore, said.

Behind the scenes, stage manager Mandy Marcell said that the play, whose name itself bears reference to the Bible, features a number of Biblical allusions and characters. The time period of the show is an amalgam of the Ice Age and the early 1900s. Senior Maeve Wiesen said that although the timeline can make it confusing at first, she predicts that the audience will find it very interesting by the end.

To help the audience grasp the main message of the play, the co-directors are focusing more specifically on individual scenes and characters and less on the overall arch of the play.

"We are working with the actors to identify each character's individual wants and to tell the story in pieces," Bromley said. "Once these pieces are put together the audience can understand the big picture."

The play features many freshmen this year, five compared to the usual two in past years.

Isaac Mukamal, who plays an announcer and a dinosaur in the show, said he enjoys working with the cast and loves how accepting everyone is.

"It's very kind that people don't think of us as freshmen, but as just a member of the cast," Mukamal said.

Several of the cast members identified a strong sense of community not only during rehearsal, but also during the school day as well.

"It's this idea that when you're walking around the halls, these [the cast members] are the people that you're gonna say 'Hi' to and these are the people that you're friends with," Wiesen said.

According to Bromley, the subject matter of the play is particularly relevant right now.

"With global warming, this year's presidential race, the great leaps in technological advances and the increased fear of terrorist attacks challenging us to step up and keep going, to struggle and survive and show how we can rise up to build a future that reflects the beauty, brilliance and undefeatable spirit of the human race, it seems like the perfect time to produce this play," Bromley said.

Lexington High School music ensembles hold fall concerts

■ Talia Blatt
Emily Chen
Staff Writers

The Fall String Celebration on Oct. 20 kicked off the fall concerts for the year. It is one of two performances during which all three Lexington High School orchestras perform.

The Repertoire Orchestra opened the concert by playing three pieces.

"There were several highlights for me. The Repertoire Orchestra played one of their pieces, The Suite for Strings, the very best they had ever played it. It is a difficult piece and they showed so much growth," Janet Haas, the conductor, said.

Chamber Orchestra performed two movements of Carl Nielsen's "Kleine Suite." The students were generally pleased with their performance.

"I'm happy that for our first concert we put out a solid showing and were able to listen to each other. Our section leaders did a good job cueing and listening to each other," Julia Chiang, a junior cellist in Chamber Orchestra, said.

On Oct 27, Chamber Orchestra, Wind Ensemble and Concert Band performed in the Fall Instrumental Concert.

Wind Ensemble played "Country Gardens" by Percy Grainger. Sophomore Alexander Tung, who plays trumpet in the Wind Ensemble, called the piece one of the highlights of the concert.

"It contains some very questionable note choices. Those kind of create a dissonance, which is kind of shocking or disconcerting from the rest of the piece, which is very happy and major," Tung said.

Chamber Orchestra played Smetana's "Bartered Bride Overture," and accompanied pianist Andrew Li in the third movement of Edvard Grieg's "Concerto in A minor."

Concert Band played "Procession of the Nobles" and "First Suite in Eb for Military Band." Jason Dai, a freshman and member of Concert Band, described the latter song.

"The dynamics and the expression have to be exactly correct to make it the piece that it's supposed to be," Dai said.

Additionally, the honors choruses, the Madrigals, Concert Choir, and Women's Choir, performed at the Fall Choral Concert on Nov. 9.

Concert Choir sang Scottish folk songs, including "Loch Lomond" and "Comin' Through the Rye." They also sang "Zigeunerleben," composed by Robert Schumann.

"I like Scottish folk songs because there's a cool story about [losing] a lover and they'll never see them again, and it's really sad," Yoojee Kim, a Concert Choir member, said.

Madrigals sang Eric Whitacre's "Lux Aurumque" in Latin and Veljo Tormis's "Sügismaastikud." Tormis uses autumn as a metaphor to express the Estonian revolution.

"The piece is an analogy for the oppression. [Tormis envisions] muddy roads and fields on fire and blood red leaves," Emily Zhang, a senior Madrigals member, said.

Some choir ensembles sang in various languages.

"I think it's one of the coolest parts, because the pronunciation is normally not difficult … It's like a way to experience other cultures, and different languages, and overall have more variety," Mona Tavangar, a junior Madrigals member said.

Documentary inspires potential changes within the LPS system

Ishika Jha
Clare Wiesen
Staff Writers

The new documentary "Beyond Measure" is inspiring change within the Lexington public school system.

The documentary focuses on school reform, and how public schools can move toward project-based learning that integrates more than one class subject. For example, in schools shown in the film, students work on projects where they use knowledge from both physics and world history.

A screening of the film was held on Oct. 18. Claire Sheth, the host of the screening, said "the screening was meant to inspire Lexington to think about what education might look like here moving forward in ways that could have the dual effect of minimizing stress."

Stress in the Lexington Public Schools, particularly Lexington High School, is a topic that is often discussed among students, parents and administrators.

"We're aware as adults and educators and parents of the pressure students are under and this march to success, achievement driven culture," Principal Laura Lasa said. "Beyond Measure" "helps people to understand we're aware of it and we really want to start talking about how we change that," Lasa said.

One change that students could potentially see in the future is a redesign of the block schedule. The current schedule of "the six or seven block march is really outdated .... We're one of the few schools that still keeps that," Lasa said.

There are two routes of change for fixing the schedule. One is to remove study halls and open campus to have longer blocks for project-based learning. Another is to have a longer block schedule that rotates over six to seven days. Either way a committee made of both educators and parents would need to agree on a solution before any decisions are made, Lasa said.

As with all change, there are some concerns coming from Lexington parents. The concerns are mainly about the rigor and the difficulty of academics going down. In order to convince those with concerns, parents need to be informed about the current state of the students' stress levels.

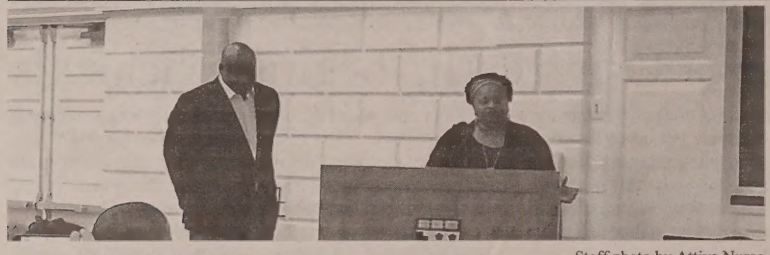
Ivor Vaz, a Lexington parent who watched the documentary, said students are "in this pressure mode because of grades and homework, and it makes an impact on them."

Results from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey can be used to look at this more closely. "The percentage of kids who are reporting anxiety and depression and substance use and suicidal ideation because of pressure" increase the need for awareness, Lasa said.

Another way to appeal concerns is to offer solutions, as "Beyond Measure" shows. Although there are concerned parents, the majority of the response to the documentary and the prospect of change is positive.

In the future, if "thinking changes all over, having Lexington schools at the top won't even be an issue because everybody will then be encouraging the kids to do what they do best," Paula Britto Vaz, another Lexington parent who watched the documentary, said.

Lasa said she is looking for students who have ideas for future changes. In the coming months she is going to have meetings with groups of students during I Block to discuss parts of "Beyond Measure" and integrating elements into LHS.



Staff photo by Attiya Nurse

The METCO program celebrates its 50th annniveersay at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.

METCO celebrates 50th anniversary

Amina Khan
Azalea Yunus
Staff Writers

On Oct. 30, the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunities, celebrated its 50th anniversary at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.

The METCO program, started in 1966, is a voluntary desegregation initiative aiming to integrate students from urban and suburban environments. Lexington was one of the original towns to participate, and both the 50th anniversary of the METCO program and its branch in Lexington were recognized at the event. Today, the Lexington METCO branch is led by Barbara Hamilton, the K-12 Academic Director of METCO.

Hamilton said "when I see the heart of this program, which is to bring students together from different racial backgrounds and different ethnicities ... laughing, joking, interacting ... learning in a classroom together ... those are memorable moments for me."

The anniversary event was attended by 340 people, including current and former METCO students, families, teachers, and administrators. It began with a reception, where newspaper articles and photos over the last 50 years were on display in a gallery. It then moved into a screening of the documentary "On the Line: Where Sacrifice Begins."

The documentary, written, produced and directed by Lexington METCO alumnus Michael Mascoll, follows the institution of the METCO program from its origins after racial segregation conflicts in Boston during the civil rights movements to its existence today. His film uses original audio, video recording and interviews to provide information about METCO in an authentic manner.

Following the screening, a panel discussion comprised of faculty and alumni was gathered. Lexington speakers included Lexington High School Principal Laura Lasa, Lexington Public School Superintendent Mary Czajkowski, current student Jaida Fonfield, and President of the LHS Class of 2015 Makeda Daniel. Additional attendees included Dean Scott Kmack and METCO academic support Mary Gretchen Seagers.

The celebration focused on how students were able to interact with a more diverse group of people and become better prepared for the globally connected world. "[With] all that's going on in our country, now ... there's certainly as great a need, if not greater, to bring about people from different racial backgrounds and ethnicities...so that we can all learn how to grow together," said Hamilton.

Junior Damon Dubose spoke of the impact being part of the Lexington Community has had on his life. "At first I was nervous about coming into Lexington ... but ... so far I would say it was one of the best sacrifices I've ever made because I met so many people and gained a lot more opportunities and knowledge that I wouldn't have in Boston," Dubose said.

While much of the anniversary event was centered upon on the past and present, families, faculty, and students alike attested to the future of the program. The success of METCO for the past 50 years through the integration of students from both suburban and city life is one participants hope to see sustained in the future.

Community reacts to I Block after first quarter

Alexandria Snyders Dykeman
Rachel Zhang
Staff Writers

This year, I Block was introduced as an opportunity for students to meet with teachers, peers, or complete schoolwork. The extra time is intended to allow for freedom within each student's busy schedule in school and after school.

I Block was originally proposed as a replacement for X Block.

"A lot of time and research went into [the] implementation of I Block," said counselor Stacy McFadden.

McFadden said that the Lexington High School staff was "part of the planning process." McFadden "was involved in some meetings talking about what we could offer as counselors as part of I Block."

McFadden said "[she] was really excited to hear about I Block. It is a great opportunity for students to get work done and extra help within the school day, hopefully freeing up some time after school."

However, the limitation of having homeroom once a week has made accessing students a challenge, because "as counselors, we used homeroom a lot to communicate with students," McFadden said.

Two months into the new schedule with I Block, McFadden said LHS is "still trying to get used to it but I think it has a lot of benefits for staff and students."

Many students were originally skeptical about this new idea. Caitlyn Neville, a junior, said, "I Block meant shorter class time, and I was worried material would be rushed. However, as it turns out, I Block has been very helpful for me in terms of meeting with teachers and having more time for homework," Neville said.

Hilary Cameron, a junior, said she uses her time like "a study hall" but could see the advantages in using the time to make up tests as well. "It is so helpful to get to see my teachers and make up work after missing school, instead of having to find time after or before school," said Cameron. However, she said she would like "some other fun activities to do during the block to help with stress relief."

To read more, visit lexmusket.com

What are you thankful for?

"The first thing that comes to mind is my husband, because, when I'm, like, ridiculously stressed, he makes dinner .... I am thankful that I am making great steps towards my personal definition of success and not the definition of that which is in the world."

—Béckie Rankin, French teacher

"I'm thankful for those days when the school is legally not allowed to give us homework."

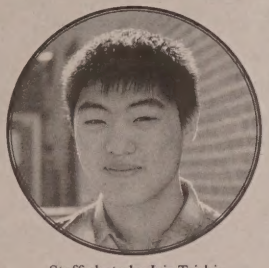
—Laurine Aldairy, sophomore

"I am thankful to live in such a wonderful town, with such great teachers and such great competition to help me learn."

—Sidharth Anantha, freshman

"I'm thankful for my family and friends, because they are what is getting me through junior year, currently."

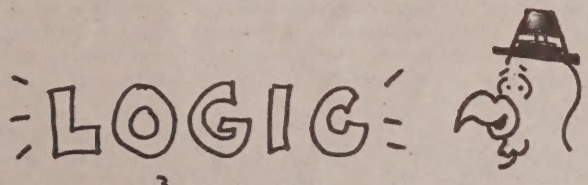
—Genevieve Wharton, junior

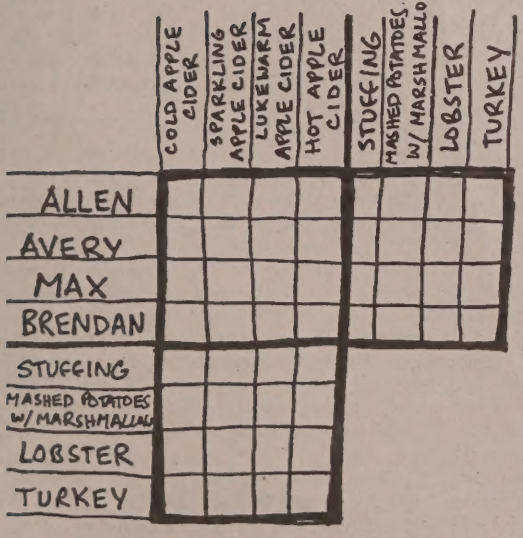


Staff photo by Iris Tsirkin

"I am thankful for my friends, especially in senior year; a lot of people tend to get a little salty, so it's good to have - it's good have the real close friends by you."
"I'm... just thankful for the people that like, are still... willing to talk to me, even though I'm like really salty right now."

—John Guo, senior





CLUES:

1. The turkey lover's name doesn't start with A.
2. Lobster only goes with sparkling cider.
3. The stuffing lover and the cold apple cider lover both have names w/o the letter 'n'.
4. Allen only likes marshmallows by themselves.
5. Hot apple cider doesn't go with meat.
6. Brendan is not a fan of potatoes.
7. Max likes stuffing.

Graphic by Rina Lu

For answers, visit lexmusket.com.

Varsity football team attains unexpected victories this season

Nikki Kim
Caitlin Deschner
Staff Writers

The Lexington High School football team finished its regular season with an undefeated 7-0 record and sole possession of its first Middlesex League title in 33 years.

"It's an honor to win [the title]. It shows you that your hard work and everything you've put into this is actually paying off," Zach Stevens, a senior captain, said. "That's really the special part about the season: we're right there with part of the history of the school."

Sal Frelick, a junior captain of the team and starting quarterback, said, "We had a lot of young talent so we knew coming into this year that we were going to be a tough team to beat," Running for 12 touchdowns and throwing for 14, he accounted for 162 of the 217 points scored in the first five games.

According to Stevens, the team's bonding and work ethic played a major role in their success this year.

"Every second you want to be better than the guy you're going against and I think everyone's really bought into that," Stevens said.

Frelick credited the team's success this year to leadership.

"We have great captains and leaders on the team that push everyone to work their hardest in practice and that translates into games," he said.

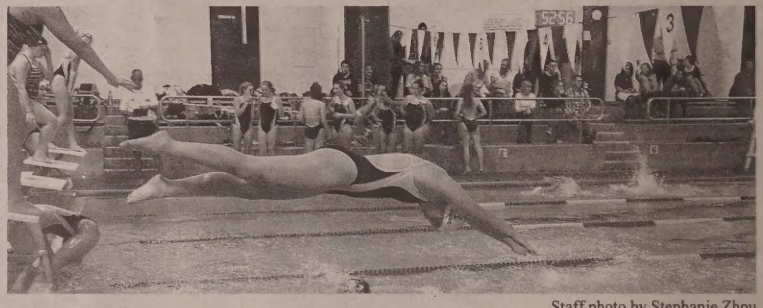
After a long winning streak, the team was met with an overtime loss against Andover in their first playoff game. However, in their first game following the loss, the team immediately bounced back with a 61-41 win against Lowell.

Although their playoff run was stopped short, both Stevens and Frelick see the team going in a positive direction in the years ahead.

"[The underclassmen bring] fresh talent and an energetic spirit to keep it going for the coming years," Stevens said.

GIRLS' FALL SPORTS WRAP UP

Brandon Wu
Staff Writer



Staff photo by Stephanie Zhou

Lexington senior swimmer Angela Gong dives into the pool during the 400m freestyle relay during a meet.

Girls' Field Hockey

The Lexington High School girls' varsity field hockey team heads into this year's state tournament with 13 wins and four losses thanks to the experienced roster with 13 seniors on the varsity team, including captains Emily Devine and Ally Aquilina-Piscitello.

Coach Laura Galopim saw the team progress through the season as they faced scoring struggles early on, but found their rhythm later in the season. They hope to carry that momentum into their last game and into the state tournament.

The highlight of the season for Galopim was the team's victory over Winchester. "We lost to them the first time around, so it was nice to get that win the second time we played them," Galopim said. The team also hoped to make a difference off the field. "This year the field hockey team hosted its first Best Buddies game and raised money for the Lexington L.A.B.B.B. program. We had many fans come out on that Columbus Day morning and it felt great to see so many people out supporting the team and Best Buddies program," Galopim said.

Girls' Swimming

The LHS Girls' Varsity Swim team finished another dominant season with a record of eight wins and three losses.

Coach Ann Boudrot said the team did a "very a good job at the meets and worked hard throughout the season." Backed by their effort and performance throughout the season, they look to finish strong with Sectionals and the State Championships.

For Boudrot, the highlight of the season was seeing senior Cara Hughes' hard work pay off. After just barely missing the 100 meter butterfly cut for sectionals, Hughes was nevertheless chosen to swim butterfly in the 400 meter relay. "It was very exciting because she made it," said Boudrot.

The girls' swim team also placed third in the league meet. "The girls swam well and Kate Vogelzang made the sectional cut in the 100 [meter] backstroke, which is nice to add another swimmer to go to sectionals," said Boudrot.

Courtesy photo by Rebecca Trachsel

LHS girls' varsity cross country runners competing during a meet against athletes from several other schools.

Asiya Karim
Staff Writer

Girls' Cross Country

The Lexington High School girls' varsity cross country team finished its regular season holding a record of six wins and one loss, to Woburn, whom they later came back to beat at the League Meet. On Oct. 31, the varsity team won the Middlesex League Meet for the ninth year in a row.

Coach Rebecca Trachsel attributes the victory to their dedication and hard work.

"They poured their hearts into that race and left nothing behind. It was incredible to watch," Trachsel said. The 35 runners led by captains Grace Leightheiser, Danielle Kerr, Alexandra Wolf and Natalie Moon "created a powerhouse of a team."

The most memorable moment for the team was the race at Catholic Memorial where they managed to secure an unexpected second place finish. As for their victory at the Middlesex League Meet, Trachsel said, "They did it for each other, not for themselves and that made all the difference."

Over the course of the season, the team was forced to overcome injuries, balance academics and sports and cope with the end of season burn out. In the end, the "hope is that the girls on the team continue to come every day with the desire to have fun and get better [regardless of wins or losses]."

Ten runners will be competing at the upcoming EMass Divisional Meet and those who qualify will move on to compete at the MIAA All State-Meet.

"Every day I thank my lucky stars that I get to go to work. It is my dream job. And I am beyond grateful to LHS for the opportunity to work with these amazing kids," Trachsel said.

Girls' Volleyball

The Lexington High School girls' varsity volleyball team faced many ups and downs this fall, with a record of 9-10. "Their passion for the sport and their competitive edge grew throughout the season. They challenged themselves, their teammates and their opponents to work hard," Anne Chatfield, coach of the varsity team, said.

This season, the league was especially competitive, resulting in close matches and a developing competitive spirit. Highlights of the season came in matches against Arlington and Reading, in which the varsity team was able to overcome halftime deficits and claim hard-fought victories.

"It's great when you face them again and come back tougher," Chatfield said.

Chatfield was also proud of her team in a win against Woburn and a loss against Winchester.

"[The] energy in the gym was awesome, our fans were cheering loudly, and the girls worked together to beat Woburn," Chatfield said. Although the girls were unable to defeat Winchester, they were nevertheless resilient, "challeng[ing] them in every way and didn't let their record of wins dictate [their] play."

Coach Chatfield attributed their success to teamwork and communication. "When the girls communicated and worked together, they were unstoppable. Every player walks onto the court wanting to win, but it's when you work together that it's possible to win."